

What is claimed is:

1        1.    Apparatus for processing business data processing  
2        activities, said apparatus comprising:

3                an activity instance; and

4                a descriptor for said activity instance associated  
5        uniquely with said activity instance;

6                wherein said descriptor includes parameters for  
7        determining lifecycle behaviors of said activity instance.

8        2.    Apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein said descriptor  
9        is programmable to modify said lifecycle behaviors according  
10       to a use made of said activity instance.

11       3.    Apparatus as claimed in claim 2 wherein said use of said  
12       activity instance is responsive to a request by a client.

13       4.    Apparatus as claimed in claim 2 wherein said use of said  
14       activity instance is responsive to a request by an activity  
15       instance.

16       5.    Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said descriptor  
17       is programmable to modify said lifecycle behaviors according  
18       to a position in a system hierarchy of said activity instance.

1 6. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said descriptor  
2 enables control of concurrency of activity instances.

1 7. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said descriptor  
2 enables control of re-creation of activity instances.

1 8. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said descriptor  
2 enables control of termination of activity instances.

1 9. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said descriptor  
2 permits creation of an activity instance identifier.

10. A method for processing business data processing  
activities, said method comprising the steps of:

3 defining activity lifecycle characteristics in a  
4 descriptor;

5 associating said descriptor uniquely with an activity  
6 instance; and

7 using said descriptor to control a lifecycle of said  
8 activity instance.

1 11. A method as claimed in claim 10, wherein said descriptor  
2 is programmable to enable definition of varying activity

3 lifecycle characteristics according to a use made of said  
4 activity instance.

1 12. A method as claimed in claim 11 wherein said use of said  
2 activity instance is responsive to a request by a client.

1 13. A method as claimed in claim 11 wherein said use of said  
2 activity instance is responsive to a request by an activity  
3 instance.

1 14. A method as claimed in claim 10, wherein said descriptor  
is programmable to modify said lifecycle behaviors according  
to a position in a system hierarchy of said activity instance.

1 15. A method as claimed in claim 10, wherein said descriptor  
enables control of concurrency of activity instances.

1 16. A method as claimed in claim 10, wherein said descriptor  
enables control of re-creation of activity instances.

1 17. A method as claimed in claim 10, wherein said descriptor  
enables control of termination of activity instances.

1 18. A method as claimed in claim 10, wherein said descriptor  
2 permits creation of an activity instance identifier.

1 19. A computer program product comprising computer program  
2 instructions stored on a computer-readable medium for, when  
3 loaded into a computer and executed, causing the computer to  
4 carry out the steps of the method as claimed in claim 10.

1 20. A computer program product as claimed in claim 19,  
2 wherein said descriptor is programmable to enable definition  
3 of varying activity lifecycle characteristics according to a  
4 use made of said activity instance.

1 21. A computer program product as claimed in claim 20 wherein  
2 said use of said activity instance is responsive to a request  
3 by a client.

1 22. A computer program product as claimed in claim 20 wherein  
2 said use of said activity instance is responsive to a request  
3 by an activity instance.

1 23. A computer program product as claimed in claim 19,  
2 wherein said descriptor is flexibly programmable to modify  
3 said lifecycle behaviors according to a position in a system  
4 hierarchy of said activity instance.  
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